

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OES-03 DODE-00 /057 W

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R 191623Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 166

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USDOC WASHDC

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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USDOC FOR BEWT/USSR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELEC, ETEL, TECH, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIETS INVENT COMPUTER TIME-SHARING: TECHNOCRATS  
PUSH DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE-USE CENTERS BUT PLANNERS FAIL  
TO DISCOVER METHOD OF FINANCING

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION- FEBRUARY 17 PRAVDA CARRIES REPORT  
ON CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET "AUTOMATED  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ASU)" BY DMITRIY ZHIMERIN, FIRST DEPUTY  
CHAIRMAN OF USSR STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(SCST), WHO DIRECTS COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS TO FULFILL  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR GENERAL SUPERVISION OF ALL SOVIET COMPUTER  
OPERATIONS. ZHIMERIN CLAIMS THAT DURING 9TH FYP (1971-75)  
TOTAL 2300 ASU'S, OVER 2,000  
COMPUTER CENTERS, AND MANY ENTERPRISE-LEVEL COMPUTER SERVICES WERE  
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CREATED. RESULTANT SAVINGS THROUGH UTILIZATION ASU'S ESTIMATED

AT 1.85 BILLION RUBLES FOR FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS IN TECHNOLOGY THROUGH EFFORTS SCST RESULTED BETWEEN 1973 AND 1975 IN REDUCTION IN COSTS FOR INSTALLATION OF ENTERPRISE-LEVEL ASU FROM 700-800,000 RUBLES TO 350-400,000 RUBLES AND OF INDUSTRY-LEVEL ASU FROM 1.8 MILLION RUBLES TO 1.2 MILLION RUBLES. ZHIMERIN CALLS FOR INCREASED EFFORTS DURING 10TH FYP TO DEVELOP "COLLECTIVE-USE COMPUTER CENTERS", A "NEW CONCEPT" CREATED BY SCST WHEREBY MANY SMALL USERS WOULD SHARE LARGE COMPUTER CENTERS ON TIME-SHARING BASIS. SCST HAS ALREADY COMPLETED PROJECT RECOMMENDING ESTABLISHMENT OF 22 SUCH CENTERS DURING 10TH FYP, FIRST FOUR OF WHICH WOULD BE IN MINSK, TULA, TOMSK AND TALLINN. HOWEVER, SINCE "PLANNERS" HAVE NOT YET DEVISED A "SCHEME" FOR FINANCING SUCH INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL CENTERS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT MAY BE DELAYED CONSIDERABLY. APPARENTLY ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF NEEDS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY GETTING TOO FAR AHEAD OF SOVIET BUREAUCRACY. END SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

2. IN REPORT ON "ASU: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES", ZHIMERIN CLAIMS SOVIETS HAVE REPLACED "EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM AND UNJUSTIFIED PESSIMISM" WITH AN "OBJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF REAL POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES" OF COMPUTERS AND ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGY. TWO MAIN DIRECTIONS/SOVIET/ EFFORTS TO UTILIZE COMPUTERS ARE PRODUCTION PROCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS (OVER 700 AT PRESENT) AND AUTOMATED SYSTEM OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (ASU'S), OF WHICH ABOUT 2300 (90 PERCENT OF 24TH CONGRESS GOAL) CREATED DURING 9TH FYP. NUMBER OF PROCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS PLANNED FOR 10TH FYP (THREE TIMES TOTAL CREATED LAST FIVE YEARS) EXPECTED TO RAISE PRODUCTION 3-5 PERCENT WITH PARALLEL SAVINGS IN BOTH MATERIALS AND LABOR. ZHIMERIN ESTIMATES COST OF SYSTEMS CAN BE AMORTIZED IN 2-2.5 YEARS.

3. MAJOR EFFORT DURING 10TH FYP WILL BE EXPAND NETWORK OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT ASU'S AT INDUSTRY-MINISTRY LEVEL. SYSTEMS INSTALLED SINCE 1972, PARTICULARLY MINISTRY OF INSTRUMENT MAKING, AUTOMATION EQUIPMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS ASU, PERMIT PLANNERS, ASSISTED BY "HIGHLY QUALIFIED MATHEMATICAL PROGRAMERS", TO TRY SEVERAL VARIANTS OF PLANS FOR INDUSTRY, PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION OR EVEN SINGLE PLANT BEFORE SELECTING OPTIMUM VERSION. MAJOR BOTTLE-NECK TO FURTHER EXPANSION OF ASU'S, ACCORDING TO ZHIMERIN, IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INSUFFICIENT NUMBER TRAINED PROGRAMMERS.

4. IN SLIGHT PAT-ON-PBACK FOR SCST WORK, ZHIMERIN CLAIMS THAT DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD STRUCTURE FOR ASU'S BETWEEN 1973 AND 1975 RESULTED IN REDUCING COSTS OF PLANT-LEVEL CENTER BY HALF (FROM 700-800,000 RUBLES TO 350-400,000 RUBLES) AND 30 PERCENT REDUCTION IN INDUSTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM (FROM 1.8 MILLION TO 1.2 MILLION RUBLES). FURTHER STEP IN STANDARDIZATION PROCESS INCLUDES RECENT DECISION

TO ESTABLISH SELF-FINANCING SCIENTIFIC-PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION "TSENTRPROGRAMMSYSTEM" IN KALININ TO DEVELOP STANDARD SCHEMES FOR ASU'S AT VARIOUS LEVELS. GUIDANCE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED BY SCST-PRODUCED "STATE COLLECTION OF ALGORITHMS AND PROGRAMS", WHICH SETS NUMBER SUB-SYSTEMS FOR INDUSTRY-LEVEL ASU AT 12 AND ENTERPRISE-LEVEL AT 11.

5. INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AREA OF COMPUTER APPLICATION FOR SOVIETS IS INFORMATION COLLECTION AND HANDLING. FAILURE OF MINISTRY COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY AND MINISTRY RADIO INDUSTRY TO DELIVER SUFFICIENT EQUIPMENT FOR LINKING PLANTS AND ENTERPRISES WITH COMPUTER CENTERS, ESPECIALLY MULTIPLEX EQUIPMENT, CITED AS MAJOR PROBLEM. ZHIMERIN WRITES THAT PLANS FOR NEXT TWO-THREE YEARS INCLUDE NOT ONLY GREATER PRODUCTION BUT INCREASING OPERATING SPEEDS OF THIS EQUIPMENT TO CORRESPOND TO COMPUTER CAPABILITIES. WITH REGARD COMPUTERS THEMSELVES, PLANS INCLUDE GROWTH IN PRODUCTION OF IMPROVED THIRD-GENERATION MODELS, AS WELL AS DEVELOPMENT OF MACHINES WITH LARGER CAPACITY MEMORY BANKS AND HIGHER SPEEDS IN ORDER PROVIDE REAL TIME SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS.

6. 6. TURNING TO IMPORTANT QUESTION OF ORGANIZATION OF COMPUTER CENTERS, ZHIMERIN WRITES THAT "NEW PROGRESSIVE FORM" OF CENTER, BASED ON "COLLECTIVE USE", MUST BE DEVELOPED. THE SCST HAS ALREADY COMPLETED A PROJECT FOR "STATE NETWORK OF COMPUTER CENTERS", WHICH IF IMPLEMENTED WOULD REDUCE COSTS OF COMPUTER USE BY ESTIMATED 100-300 PERCENT AT SAME TIME PROVIDING FASTER SERVICE WHEN COMPARED WITH SMALL, SINGLE-USER CENTERS. MAJOR BARRIER APPEARS BE BUREAUCRATIC: SOVIET PLANNERS HAVE FAILED TO DEVELOP "SCHEMEZS FOR FUNDING COLLECTIVE-USE CENTERS, SINCE APPARENTLY NO WAY EXISTS FOR ESTIMATING "TIME-SHARE" FOR INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES OR ENTERPRISES. REALIZATION OF SCST RECOMMENDATION FOR CREATION OF 22 TIME-SHARING CENTERS DURING 10TH FYP, INCLUDING FIRST FOUR AT MINSK, TULA, TOMSK AND TALLINN, DEPENDS LARGELY ON WHETHER BUREAUCRATIC KNOW CAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE UNTIED. ADDITIONAL FACTOR WILL BE ABILITY OF RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION MINISTRIES (RADIO INDUSTRY; COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY; INSTRUMENT MAKING, AUTOMATION EQUIPMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS) TO PRODUCE NEEDED EQUIPMENT.

7. COMMENT - DILEMMA OF FINANCING TIME-SHARING CENTERS ASSUMES ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ROLE AT TIME OF GENERAL REDUCTION OF INVESTMENT FUNDS AND PRESSING NEEDS IN OTHER AREAS, PARTICULARLY AGRICULTURE. CAPITALIST PATTERN, CREATING TIME-SHARING CENTERS WITH BORROWED OR PRIVATE FUNDS AND SELLING COMPUTER TIME TO RECOUP INVESTMENT, WHICH MOTHERED HUNDREDS OF SUCH FIRMS IN US AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, OBVIOUSLY NOT ACCEPTABLE IN SOVIET CONTEXT. SCST, AND ZHIMERIN IN PARTICULAR, HAVE VESTED INTEREST IN INSURING CONTINUED GROWTH OF COMPUTER EMPIRE. THIS ARTICLE, AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRO-COMPUTER "ADDITIONS" TO THE 25TH PARTY

THESES, ARE CLEARLY AIMED AT THE NON-TECHNOCRATS IN THE SOVIET  
DECISION-MAKING APPARATUS WHO PLACE OTHER PRIORITIES ABOVE ASU'S  
AND THEIR COMPUTERS. OUTCOME OF STRUGGLE OVER COMPUTER CENTER  
EXPANSION SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON SOVIET IMPORTS OF COM-  
PUTERS AND ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGY FROM WEST OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS,  
SINCE DOMESTIC INDUSTRY DOES NOT PRESENTLY HAVE ABILITY AND/OR  
CAPACITY TO SATISFY MANY OF NEEDS.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AUTOMATED CONTROLS, ADP SERVICES, COMPUTERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 FEB 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976MOSCOW02555  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <12 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOVIETS INVENT COMPUTER TIME-SHARING: TECHNOCRATS PUSH DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE-USE CENTERS BUT PLANNERS FAIL  
**TAGS:** ELEC, ETEL, TECH, UR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006